

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of) **CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION**
)
Deborah H. Wood)
)
Certificate # 113594)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 8, 2003. On April 2, 2003, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice of hearing of the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina Educators Certificate (certificate) to Ms. Deborah H. Wood by certified mail, restricted delivery, and return receipt requested. The postal notice that was returned to the Department indicated the notice letter was returned by the United States Postal Service "unclaimed". A second notice letter dated April 16, 2003, was served on Ms. Wood on May 24, 2003, by the Kershaw County Sheriff's Office. Ms. Wood initially requested a hearing. Subsequently to this request, the Department and Ms. Wood, through her attorney, Kenneth M. Matthews, Esquire, proposed to resolve this matter without a hearing by agreeing to the following terms: (1) her certificate will be suspended from the time she was placed on administrative leave with pay on February 7, 2003, through July 30, 2003, (2) the suspension will be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all school districts in South Carolina as a suspension on the grounds of unprofessional conduct, (3) this order will be maintained as a public record in the Office of General Counsel of the Department. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to issue a Consent Order of Suspension on the terms set forth above.

Accepted:

Initial Here

Date:

Deborah H.
Wood
#113594

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Wood holds a valid South Carolina certificate, and has over twenty-five years of teaching experience, the majority in Kershaw County. Ms. Wood was under contract in 2002-2003 with Richland School District Number Two (District), as a math teacher at Dent Middle School. From November 19, 2002 until December 11, 2002,

Ms. Wood contracted to give homebound instruction to a student. Ms. Wood provided a statement to the district that she gave this student exams and turned in an expense sheet showing over twenty-five hours of instruction (\$334.75) and 108 miles of travel (\$33.48). The student's parents denied Ms. Wood provided this instruction and also stated that she forged the mother's signature on the timesheets. Ms. Wood was placed on administrative leave with pay on February 7, 2003, and resigned March 24, 2003, effective with at the end of the school year. She did not return to the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." Just cause includes: "unprofessional conduct," S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (1990); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regulation 43-58 (1992). The State Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented by the Department, supports its decision to accept the proposal of the parties to suspend Ms. Wood's certificate. Accordingly, the Board hereby suspends Ms. Wood's certificate #113594 from February 7, 2003, through July 30, 2003, on the terms and conditions set forth above. If Ms. Wood wishes to have her certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she may make a written request to the Office of Teacher Certification of the Department.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Greg Killian

Greg Killian

Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

July 8, 2003

I, Deborah H. Wood, SC Teaching Certificate # 113954, do hereby agree to this Order of Suspension, consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the State Board of Education on Tuesday, July 8, 2003

7-8-03
Date

Deborah H. Wood
Signature

Deborah H. Wood
Certificate #113594
Page Two